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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE GOES OPERATIONAL: AN EVOLUTION UNDERWAY

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Air Force.

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Contents.....	iii
 <u>CHAPTER</u>	
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Fiscal/Political Drive Change	
Historical Perspective.....	2
Restructure of DIA.....	3
CIA "Gears Up" for Military Support.....	6
III. Revitalization of Warfighter Interest	
An Education for Ops and Intel.....	9
C4I for the Warrior.....	11
"Pull" Technology in Global Terms.....	12
IV. Conclusion.....	14
Bibliography.....	17

I

Introduction

The national intelligence community is making dramatic organizational and operational shifts in an attempt to revolutionize its traditional interaction with the deployed operational commander. This essay provides a brief overview of this ongoing intelligence revolution, focusing on the changes within the national intelligence agencies as they strive to provide better operational intelligence. The role of the Joint Force decision maker is explored, as the warfighter begins to understand the capabilities and limitations of national intelligence, and associated improvements in technology. The first section focuses on changes to the two all-source analytical fusion cells, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Changes, driven by political and fiscal realities, will be discussed in terms of transformation to jointness, and renewed emphasis on human intelligence. The second half of the essay focuses on the importance of warfighter involvement in the intelligence revolution. Discussion includes breakthroughs in communications and computers, which have created dramatic changes in the way operational commanders think about information flow within the battlespace. In this section, particular attention is given to "pulling" mission unique intelligence to the commander, rather than pushing volumes of intelligence data to all units.

II Political and Fiscal Forces

Historical Perspective

For over three decades the primary national intelligence analysis agencies of the U.S., the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), have focused most of their manpower, technology and resources on the collection and production of high-level, strategic intelligence. The agencies were created during the Cold War, the CIA in 1947 and DIA in 1961, and as a result were focused primarily on the national security of the U.S. The evolution of jointness, the changes in global threat, and fiscal realities are now forcing CONUS-based intelligence agencies to re-think the rigid, regulatory practices of the past. Although all national agencies historically supported military operations to some degree, until the late 1980's, the intelligence assets within the military services remained the primary means of tailored, operational intelligence support. Today it is a different story, however, as force reductions over the past decade have gutted a large share of the service-level intelligence infrastructure.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, there is new focus on the intelligence infrastructure, particularly at the national level. A recent critique on Operation Desert Shield/Storm offers one perspective of the baggage the intelligence community brings with it to the revolution:

Multi-layered organizations, turf battles, stovepipe reporting channels, service-unique doctrine, incompatible data links and data bases, ponderous people-intensive procedures and cultural biases all played supporting roles in impeding the downward and lateral flow of useful intelligence.¹

Yet, in all fairness, during the Persian Gulf War, the national community was given the complex task of providing continuous, tailored intelligence data and analysis, in a digestible format for the operational commander -- something the national community had little or no experience with in the past. One could argue, the reason national intelligence agencies became so central to supporting operations during the Persian Gulf War was that CENTCOM was the only regional CINC without forward deployed forces, and for this reason was without an intelligence infrastructure to provide the tailored regional support. Since these issues have surfaced, both DIA and CIA are taking steps to ensure they are better equipped in the future to meet the needs of the Joint Force Commander (JFC).

Restructure of DIA

During the first twenty years of its existence, DIA concentrated on long-range strategic analysis. This was due, in part, to the fact that it serves both the military arm of the Pentagon (the Joint Chiefs of Staff) and the Secretary of Defense. Moreover, until the mid-eighties the military services

¹Alan D. Campen, "Intelligence Leads Renaissance in Military Thinking," Signal, August 1994, p. 17.

maintained fairly robust, organic intelligence capabilities of their own, thus there was no emphasis on operational or tactical intelligence support from the national agencies.

In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act not only created the Combatant Commands, but forced DoD to rethink its intelligence infrastructure. Since the call for jointness, unity of effort, and the deemphasis of service-level (intelligence) infrastructures, the Secretary of Defense, in 1991, anointed the theater Joint Intelligence Center, or JIC, as the primary intelligence organization providing support to warfighting at all levels. The military services have fought centralization of intelligence, as they perceive a decrease in the availability of intelligence tailored to specific missions. Currently, the JIC cannot satisfy all tailored needs of each theater component, however, it does provide a central location for fusing common data, and all component and theater intelligence resources. In an era of force structure drawdown and diminishing forward deployments, this centralized approach makes sense.

Another move toward centralizing intelligence was the creation of the National Military Joint Intelligence Center (NMJIC), in the Pentagon. Under the supervision of DIA, the Joint Staff created the NMJIC to serve as the focal point for Joint Force Commander requests for national intelligence. As a result of the Persian Gulf War, the NMJIC now includes full-time representation from DIA, NSA, and CIA. It remains to be seen how

this national support structure will function in the next conflict, but there is no question about the increase in coordination and interaction of traditionally competing national agencies.

Additionally, in keeping with a theme of responsive, coordinated national support to the JFC's, DIA has been charged to head up a deployable National Intelligence Support Team, or NIST. Comprised of DIA, NSA and other government agencies, this small, self-contained, highly responsive team can be in theater and operating in support of the JFC within 24 hours of notification. The team brings with it liaison personnel of the agencies represented and incorporates dedicated communications and access to the agencies' resources. This arrangement is designed to complement, rather than replicate, existing resources and communications within the theater of operations. One officer from a recent JTF operation sums up his views about the NIST:

The NIST, in particular, was an irreplaceable addition to the (J2) staff and provided insights and access not otherwise available from purely theater resources. Their complete integration into the J2 organization was an essential element of our success and resulted in requirements being anticipated through daily participation in the process. The NIST provided us with answers we had not even thought to ask for yet.²

Although the NIST brings with it tremendous capability to provide rapid answers to detailed questions, it cannot support all the

²Interview with CDR Herb Loughery, Intelligence Officer, USN, Naval Education and Training Command, Newport, RI: November, 1994.

intelligence needs of the JFC. It is designed for those requests for information (RFIs) which need a response in less than 24 hours. It is clear DIA has had considerable success in leading the effort to integrate and centralize control of a massive DoD intelligence effort. Problem "baggage" remains, however, as DoD prepares for its next conflict. Military commanders below the Joint Force level will continue to cry for intelligence support, tailored specifically to their mission needs. Many warfighters argue this tailored support can only come from dwindling organic (service owned) intelligence assets. Although improvement in communications has brought DIA, and the other national agencies, closer to meeting some of those tailored needs, technology alone cannot solve all intelligence problems, particularly those rooted in the agencies' cultural and philosophical differences.

CIA "Gears Up" for Military Support

With a less tangible enemy upon which to focus (Soviet Union), the CIA has been under considerable pressure to refocus assets to better reflect today's global picture. The space boom of the 1960's contributed to a strategic oriented national community, as most of the intelligence collection and analysis focused on high-tech remote sensing from satellites. Future conflicts will lend themselves less to purely technical collection and analysis. Events in the former Soviet Union, the Persian Gulf, and more recently North Korea, remind us that technical intelligence is not sufficient to accurately predict

intentions of other governments. Since today's defense strategy is affected more by the unpredictable behavior of emerging third world states, than the arms monitoring of bipolar superpowers, a renewed emphasis is being placed on the collection and analysis of human intelligence, or HUMINT. During intelligence committee hearings following the Persian Gulf War, "concerns (were raised) about the responsiveness of the CIA's human source collection program to the Defense Department's peacetime requirements and the adequacy of CIA human intelligence support to military operations in time of crisis and transition to war..."³ As a result, congressional intelligence committees have placed special emphasis upon the enhancement of HUMINT capabilities. While it is unfair to question CIA's resolve to support military operations, it is not unreasonable to assert the CIA and DoD have lacked an effective mechanism to make military commanders aware of relevant HUMINT developments. In a significant change for the CIA, Congress has suggested: "The DCI should create within the Directorate of Operations at CIA, the position of Assistant Deputy Director for Military Support to facilitate the interaction between CIA and the military."⁴ As a result of this 1992 congressional language, then Director, Robert Gates created

³U.S. Congressional Report, Senate, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Authorizing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1992 for the Intelligence Activities of the U.S. Government. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1991), p.6.

⁴U.S. Congress, House, House of Representatives. Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1992, Conference Report, (Washington: U.S. Gov't. Print. Off., 1991), p. 33.

a new Office of Military Affairs (OMA), to ensure the CIA placed a higher priority on supporting the military, particularly during crises.⁵ This office, headed by a two star flag officer, provides the DoD a single point of contact within the CIA for all defense intelligence related matters. OMA is responsible for coordinating CIA support to various DoD locations, to include the NMJIC in the Pentagon, the Combatant CINC's, and the regional JICs. Thanks to recent post-war testimony and a substantial nudge from Congress, these changes are a step in the right direction, but a couple of concerns are worth mentioning. First, the CIA still has a separate command structure and their primary mission is to support national security. This philosophical difference is not a small one, and the evolution towards military oriented products and support will likely be at a slower pace than DoD would like. Secondly, within DoD there has always been a single point of contact for primary functional areas (J1, J2, J3, etc.). The J2 is responsible for all intelligence matters. Whether at the JCS, regional command, or the JTF level "...the intelligence effort must be unified. The integration of intelligence representatives and liaison personnel at each organizational level will result in complete access to intelligence capabilities to support mission responsibilities

⁵Pat Towell, "Gates Rejects Legislative Call, Sets Administrative Changes," Congressional quarterly Weekly Report, Apr 1992, p. 894.

without regard to organization or command configurations."⁶ The JFC must be able to count on the J2 for a single, consolidated view, based on all operational considerations. As of now, the CIA refuses to be subordinated to the J2 due to the institutional concern related to the protection of sources and methods. This organizational roadblock will inherently cause problems for the military commander if the CIA's analysis is not coordinated and integrated into a unified JTF/J2 position.

III

Revitalization of Operations/Intelligence Interface

An Education for OPS and INTEL

JFCs' Congressional testimony has raised the public awareness and interest in how commanders make decisions and more importantly where their intelligence comes from. During the Persian Gulf War and in subsequent testimony before Congress, General Norman Schwarzkopf specifically pointed out perceived deficiencies in intelligence he received, particularly from the national-level intelligence agencies. Many of Schwarzkopf's staff argued the national agencies were not always responsive or sensitive to the needs of the theater. Wherever the blame belongs, awareness has been heightened and problems identified. In spite of (perhaps because of) all the finger pointing, the

⁶Draft, JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations, Dec 1994, section 3-6.2

operations community (referred to from now on as the J3) has taken a real interest in what intelligence they did and did not have during the Persian Gulf War. The resulting awareness is not just a lesson for the intelligence community, but for the operations community as well.

It is clear, as a result of Persian Gulf dialogue, decision makers at various operational levels believed they had no influence over national resources. Moreover, they believed the national community was capable of providing more than it could. Historically, the operational community has always demanded better intelligence, but in the area of acquisition and integration into existing forces they have paid lip service to strengthening of intelligence infrastructures. Imagery dissemination systems, tactical reconnaissance systems and intelligence data bases are just a few of the areas where the services have refused to sacrifice bombs and bullets for a reliable intelligence structure. An education is taking place with regards to system capabilities and limitations, which will ensure realistic intelligence demands of the national support structure. As a result of this new education, the J3 community is demanding more from intelligence and better understands the growing link between communications, command and control, and intelligence. Even with this education, many of the post-war concerns related to intelligence support to operations (particularly national intelligence), were right on target and, as discussed in the previous chapter, agencies such as DIA and

CIA are "off and running" to address many of these issues.

C4I For the Warrior

In the 1980's intelligence and communications discovered one another. This discovery, coupled with J3's renewed interest, is paying dividends. The JCS/J3 has embraced new developments in joint architectures, in particular an emerging command, control, communications and intelligence (C4I) architecture called "C4I for the Warrior." This concept is explained by the Joint Staff as follows: "U.S. forces must be able to see the same picture of the battlefield constantly updated each second, and increasingly they are able to achieve that through the rapid processing and exchange of information now made possible by state-of-the-art communications and computer technologies."⁷ Statements like this are necessary for creating awareness and providing a generalized vision for organizations involved in developing the capabilities. The J3 community, however, cannot stop with broad visionary statements. Action officers, at all staff levels, need to roll up their sleeves and explain to the producers of intelligence what exactly it is they need to make decisions or execute missions. Until recently, communications technology was incapable of providing near-real-time intelligence to commanders in the field, especially on-demand. While technology has made tremendous advances over the past thirty years, it is really only

⁷Leonard H. Perroots, "New Approaches to C3 Intelligence Efforts," Signal, September 1988, p.32.

in the past 5-10 years that a whole new "global" approach to passing information is being adopted for defense purposes. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Mr. Keith Hall, puts it this way: "Technology today provides the power to be as timely as necessary to support the customer. The only barriers now are bureaucracy and the inability of systems to interoperate..."⁸ Although this view tends to oversimplify the technological challenges which remain, such as satellite access and saturation of communications "pipes," Mr. Hall's suggestion that technology is no longer the primary obstacle is dead on.

"Pull" Technology in Global Terms

Over the years, services built systems primarily in accordance with their own specifications. Between the services and the national agencies, "stovepipes" were built to pass technical intelligence to meet specific unit requirements, but with little consideration to redundancy or integration with other sources. As defined by (then) Maj Gen James Clapper, Chief of Intelligence for the Air Staff: "stovepipe is a term given to vertical organizations that collect, process, analyze and disseminate one category of intelligence without integrating other types of intelligence into the final product."⁹ Due to the

⁸Keith Hall, "Intelligence Community Grasps Daring New Corporate Approach," Signal, December 1993, p. 52.

⁹James R. Clapper, "Desert War was Crucible for Intelligence Systems," Signal, Sep 1991), p. 77.

nature of intelligence collection over the past thirty or forty years, the focus has always been on "pushing" as much of this "stovepiped" information as possible down to the lowest levels, so everyone has access. Since the late 1980's the DoD has tried to break free of these "stovepipe" arrangements, but until recently bureaucracy and technology have stymied the effort.

Congressman Dan Glickman, former Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, explains: "I think that we are entering an era where that entire system (the 'push' system) will be tilted on its side. We will not push information; customers will pull it."¹⁰ Pulled intelligence will be more widespread and timely as communications and theater interoperability evolves. Through the use of high volume communication pipes and relay satellites, forward deployed personnel will be able to access huge data bases of finished intelligence from theater or national intelligence hubs. Worldwide networks will share common data bases and allow a military unit to access only the information it needs to make a decision or accomplish the mission. One Army officer provides some perspective on how battlefield units must be able to interact with intelligence in the future:

Units ought to be able to ask specific questions, based on synchronization, and have the questions prioritized by higher headquarters and reach into the data base and pull the answers out and provide them. The

¹⁰Rich Haver, quoted in Clarence A. Robinson, "Intelligence Community Recasts Roles, Confronts Myriad Threats," Signal, August 1994, p. 22.

capability eliminates having to load up [units] with huge data bases that have to be passed from one spot to another, which reduces the drag on communication bandwidth -- asking specific questions at specific times.¹¹

What the theater commander continues to want is specifically tailored information. The need for vast amounts of intelligence data and lengthy analytical reporting at the operational level is outdated. Commanders need timely access to finished intelligence products which are more useable for decision making, such as visually depicting enemy movements and prioritized threats. It is not enough that future data bases and communications will be compatible through common language and formats, but now visual displays and graphic representations tailored for the JFC is where the C4I community is headed. Providing clear guidance of what these products must look like in the future is where the J3 needs to lead the way.

IV

Conclusion

National intelligence agencies are reorganizing, restructuring and re-tooling their capabilities to be more responsive to operational needs. DIA and CIA have made, and continue to make, significant changes to their traditional

¹¹John F. Stewart, Jr., quoted from "Commanders Pull Intelligence in Information Warfare Strategy," Signal, August 1994, p. 31.

strategic oriented paradigms. In turn, fiscal and political forces have driven CONUS-based intelligence agencies to pick up a greater share of the operational support responsibilities.

By creating regional and national Joint Intelligence Centers, DIA continues to refine its coordination role for the defense intelligence community. CIA received a "wake up call" from Congress regarding a gap in military support, and an effort to better coordinate with military requirements, CIA has created the Office of Military Affairs. The challenges for both DIA and CIA is to rethink outdated intelligence support methodologies, and find ways to support the warfighter's demands for more useable products. The intelligence revolution has been underway for several years, but unprecedeted change is being facilitated by the revitalized interest in, and critique of, intelligence by theater commanders. Traditional "afterthought" approaches to integrating intelligence into the Joint Force picture are being replaced with a better understanding of what national intelligence can and, more importantly, cannot provide. As these ops/intel barriers are addressed and dealt with, more timely useable intelligence will be available to the deployed force.

Sophisticated communications networks are evolving which will allow deployed decision makers, theater intelligence producers and national intelligence agencies to enter and extract intelligence from every available source, in near-real-time. More user-friendly products are being demanded by warfighters and, as a result, new methods of providing intelligence to the

Joint Force decision makers are being incorporated into the intelligence cycle. Traditional operational relationships between intelligence and C2 are fading and new global networks are resulting in a legitimate C4I for the warrior concept.

If the warfighter supports the revolution taking place in the national intelligence community, he must stay involved in a process which is well underway. More specifically, the J3 community must be the driving force behind this shift within the national intelligence agencies to better support military operations. If actively involved in the solution, the Joint Force Commander, not the intelligence officer, is the ultimate benefactor. Just as it should be!

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